Freedom of Information Act 2000

Guide to Information provided by Parish/Community Councils under the model publication scheme

This template guide is written for the use of Parish and Community Councils.

It gives examples of the kind of information the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) would expect you to provide in order to meet your commitment under the model publication scheme, introduced through the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). In 2008, the ICO introduced a generic model publication scheme, for adoption by all public authorities that are subject to FOIA.

The model publication scheme commits you to 'produce and publish the method by which the specific information will be available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public'.

The model publication scheme is available on the ICO website. Further details are available in ICO guidance: Using the definition documents.

You must adopt the model scheme in full, unedited and promoted alongside the guide to information. You do not need to tell the ICO that you have adopted the scheme; we will assume they have done so unless we hear otherwise.

You are in breach of FOIA if you have not adopted the model scheme or are not publishing in accordance with it.

Information included in the guide to information

The template lists the information that the ICO thinks you are likely to hold and should make proactively available within each class. When completed, this will provide a list of all the information you will routinely make available, explain how it can be accessed and whether or not a charge will be made for it. You must:

- complete the relevant columns in the template guide;

- state how an applicant can obtain the specific information and if there is a cost involved;
- ensure the public can access the completed guide and the information listed in it.

The ICO expects you to make the information in this template guide available unless:

- you do not hold the information;
- the information is exempt under one of the FOIA exemptions or Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) exceptions, or its release is prohibited by another statute (eg UK GDPR);
- the information is readily and publicly available from an external website; such information may have been provided by you or on your behalf. You must provide a direct link to that information;
- the information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible; or,
- it would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare the material for routine release.

If the information is only held by another public authority, you should provide details of where to obtain it.

This guidance is not meant to give an exhaustive or definitive list of everything that should be covered by a publication scheme. The legal commitment is to the model publication scheme, and you should look to provide as much information as possible on a routine basis, which must include all information that is required by statute.

This guidance now incorporates those key principles, which were not already included, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC, originally known as the Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG]), Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities. The aligning of this document with this Code provides a harmonised approach to data transparency for you and avoids unnecessary duplication

Publishing datasets for re-use

As a public authority, you must publish under your publication scheme any dataset you hold that has been requested, together with any updated versions, unless you are satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so. So far as reasonably practicable, you must publish it in an electronic form that is capable of re-use.

If the dataset or any part of it is a relevant copyright work and you are the only owner, you must make it available for re-use under the

terms of a specified licence. Datasets in which the Crown owns the copyright or the database rights are not relevant copyright works.

The 2018 section 45 Code of Practice recommends that public authorities make datasets available for re-use under the Open Government Licence.

The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of FOIA. The terms 'relevant copyright work' and 'specified licence' are defined in section 19(8) of FOIA. The ICO has published guidance on Datasets (section 11, 19 & 45). This explains what is meant by "not appropriate" and "capable of re-use".

Fees and Charging

Information available through your publication scheme should be readily available at a low cost or at no cost to the public. If you do charge for this information, the ICO expects the charges to be justifiable, clear and kept to a minimum.

You can charge for activities such as printing, photocopying and postage as well as information that you are legally authorised to charge for. You must inform anyone requesting information of any charge before you provide the information. You must ask for payment before providing the information. Guidance on the ICO website provides more details about charging for information in a publication scheme.

If you charge a fee for licensing the re-use of datasets, you should state in the guide to information how this is calculated and whether the charge is made under the Re-use Fees Regulations or under other legislation. You cannot charge a re-use fee if they make the datasets available for re-use under the Open Government Licence.

Model Publication Scheme

The table below identifies the specific information the ICO expects you to publish under each of the seven classes of information set out in the model publication scheme.

Information available from (*insert name of Parish or Community Council*) under the Freedom of Information Act model publication scheme

This template guide covers only information we currently hold. If we do not hold some of the information listed below, we will mark it as 'not held' in the table.

Information to be published	**How the information can be obtained**	**Cost**
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts) Current information only	(hard copy or website)	
List of Council members and their responsibilities as well a list of Council Committees Details of any representation on local public bodies		
Postal and email address Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members Where possible, provide named contacts including contact phone numbers and email addresses		
Location of main Council office and accessibility details		
Staffing structure		

Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) Current and previous financial year as a minimum	(hard copy or website)	
Statement of accounts and internal audit report in the format included in the Annual Return form		
Finalised budget		
Precept		
Borrowing Approval letter		
All items of expenditure above £100		
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations		
Grants given and received		
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract		
Members' allowances and expenses		
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews) Current and previous year as a minimum	(hard copy or website)	
Annual governance statement in format included in the Annual Return form		
Parish Plan		

Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting		
Quality status		
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DLUHC's guidelines		
Data Protection impact assessments (in full or summary format) or any other impact assessment (eg Health & Safety Impact Assessment, Equality Impact Assessments etc), as appropriate and relevant		
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions) Current and previous council year as a minimum	(hard copy or website)	
Timetable of meetings (Council and any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)		
Agendas of meetings (as above)		
Minutes of meetings (as above) – exclude material that is properly considered to be exempt from disclosure		
Reports presented to council meetings – exclude material that is properly considered to be exempt from disclosure		
Responses to consultation papers		
Responses to planning applications		
Bye-laws		

Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) Current information only	(hard copy or website)	
Policies and procedures for the conduct of Council business: • Procedural standing orders • Committee and sub-committee terms of reference • Delegated authority in respect of officers • Code of Conduct • Policy statements		
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff: • Internal instructions to staff and policies relating to the delivery of services • Equality and diversity policy • Health and safety policy • Recruitment policies and details of current vacancies • Policies and procedures for handling requests for information • Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)		
Records management, personal data and access to information policies Include information security policies, records retention, destruction and archive policies, and data protection (including data sharing and CCTV usage) policies		

Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only.	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)	
Information legally required to hold in publicly available registers (in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)		
Assets register, including details of public land and building assets		
Disclosure log indicating the information provided in response to FOIA and EIR requests. These are recommended as good practice		
Register of members' interests		
Register of gifts and hospitality		
Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information only	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)	
Allotments		
Burial grounds and closed churchyards		
Community centres and village halls		
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities		
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting		
Bus shelters		
Markets		
Public conveniences		
Agency agreements		
Services for which we are entitled to		

recover a fee and details of those fees (eg burial fees)		
Additional Information Information not itemised in the lists above		

Schedule of charges

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @ ..p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost *
	Photocopying @ ..p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2nd class
Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation (quote the actual statute)
Other		

* the actual cost incurred